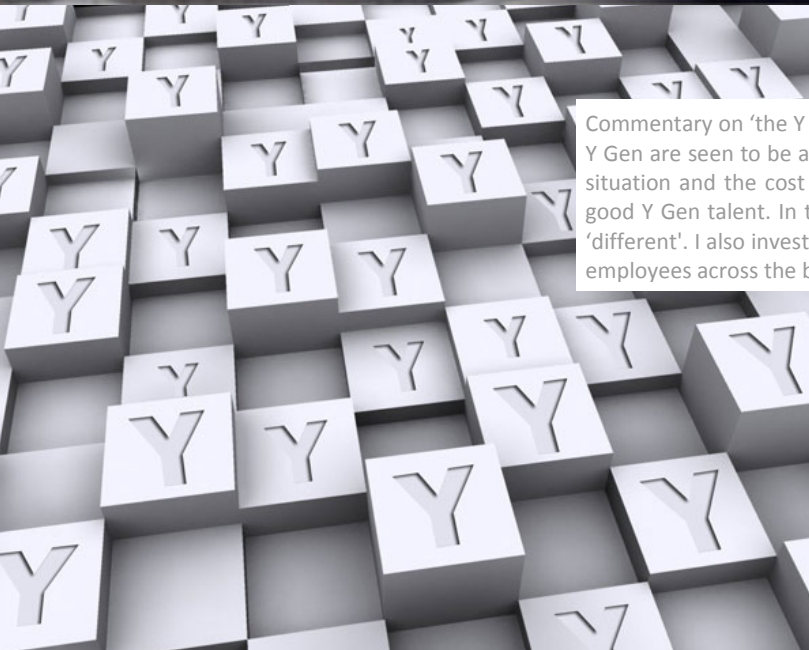


REACHING OUT



Good
MONTHLY DIGITAL NEWSLETTER EXCLUSIVELY FOR MEA PATRONS



Commentary on 'the Y Gen' is becoming more common in management and employment circles. The Y Gen are seen to be a unique and challenging segment of the work-force. Given the tight economic situation and the cost involved in recruitment, strategic employers are keen to support and retain good Y Gen talent. In this article I take a look at some of the things that make Y Gen employees so 'different'. I also investigate how responding to what Y Gen want, might find management favor with employees across the board!

Gen Y have been described as the stimuli junky generation, stimulated since they were toddlers. They just don't know how to be still! They live for change, as they don't know a world without it. Some have referred to the Y Gen as the "why?" generation. This generation wants to know the "why" behind everything. They have been submitted to so much information over their life-time: on TV, advertising, the internet that they have to sift through. "Why?" becomes a sensible part of the sifting process.

The Y Gen are an extremely practical generation. They are socially and culturally aware, but not just 'aware'. They are most likely to actually do something about what they believe in, be it environment destruction, racial discrimination and so on.

Financially, the Y Gen are used to having been provided for. Middle-class baby-boomer parents were often working and what they lost in time with parents was often compensated for in material possessions and with money for entertainment.

A great deal of Y Gen's have had to live through the challenge of parental divorce. They are not phased by challenge. They are also very interested in personal development. They crave independence in decision making, while enjoying an unprecedented financial dependence on their baby-boomer parents, well past school leaver age.

The description above is designed to paint a broad picture of what makes the Y Gen who they are. This generation poses some unique challenges for management.

Why the Y Gen Wants What All Staff Want - Fun and a Whole Lot More...

by Dr Kathryn Owler

'Why' the Y Gen?

The term 'Y Gen' refers to those individuals born between 1980-1995. The Y Gen grew up under certain unique conditions. Y Gen commentators argue that these young people are used to stimulation, change, choice and prosperity and are a highly optimistic bunch.

What Do The Y Gen Really Want From Work?

In his book, *Generation Y: Thriving & surviving with generation Y at work*, Australian Y Gen Paul Sheehan, outlines what the Y Gen want out of work. Simply put, Gen Y have higher standards for how they should be treated at work. It therefore takes much more to keep them satisfied. It pays for employers to take this seriously, as otherwise Y Gen will simply talk with their feet!

What the Y Gen Want From a Job

- ✓ Purpose & meaning
- ✓ Responsibility - that is real responsibility
- ✓ Promotional opportunity
- ✓ New challenges & experiences
- ✓ Fair compensation - they expect the big \$ by right!
- ✓ Increased employability
- ✓ Individuality & creativity
- ✓ Personal development opportunities!

What the Y Gen Want From a Workplace

- ✓ Flexibility - they are lifestyle centred
- ✓ Ethical
- ✓ Fun
- ✓ Belong and be engaged - to feel as if they belong
- ✓ Modern and edgy - workplace & operations
- ✓ Passion & optimism

What the Y Gen Want From a Boss

- ✓ Empowerment - the resources to do the job well
- ✓ Mentored not directed
- ✓ Fairness
- ✓ Recognition - thanks for a job well done
- ✓ Personal connection
- ✓ Involved & valued
- ✓ Competency

These characteristics represent both challenges and a range of opportunities for business. Y Gen commentators argue that the key is to try and understand that the Y Gen are different. They will not just stay in a job out of a sense of organization loyalty. Some of the benefits Sheehan lists of working with the Y Gen include their not being phased by challenge, a focus on belonging, being open to new technologies and better ways of doing things, being

extremely practical, and, importantly, prepared to take action.

For the first time however, current economic downturn may limit the employment choices that the Y Gen have come to expect. How the Y Gen respond to this challenge is difficult to say. While it might be more difficult for the Y Gen to pick and choose jobs, employers will always benefit from a talented, committed workforce. In recession, the Y Gen's ability innovate, take on new challenges and explore better, more efficient ways of doing things, may be even more valuable. In order to make the most of these Y Gen skills, it continues to be necessary for employers to understand just what makes this group tick.

How Do I Motivate & Retain Quality (Gen Y) Staff?

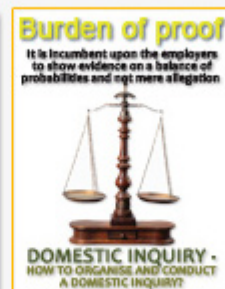
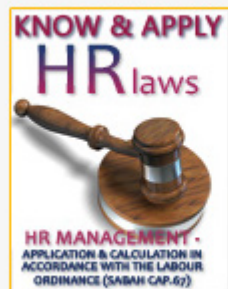
In his book, Sheehan includes a lot of suggestions for how to motivate and retain Gen Y staff. These include providing good supervision/management, variety, fun, purpose and genuine support at work.

However, none of this is something that any employee would sniff at! Indeed, Sheehan believes that the desires of Gen Y are actually those of all workers at some level. Many baby-boomers (born 1946-64) for instance are opting out of the 'rat race' for a better quality of life, while many Gen X's (1965-79) are leaving to start their own businesses. As Sheehan says, 'If you, as an organizations, were to become more Generation Y friendly, you would by default become more employee friendly. You would clearly be an employer of choice. This is because Generation Y want the same things we all want from a job, the only difference being that they expect it. Or, more frequently, they demand it'.

(Y Gen and) We All Want Fun at Work

One of the things that Sheehan explains the Y Gen want from work is a fun environment, where they feel valued as an individual. The Y Gen are extremely social. They want to be included and feel that they belong. Their youthful mindset generates a more playful attitude and makes the workplace more enjoyable. They may however need guided as to the difference between work and play.

**Seminar
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2012**



Sheehan argues that all managers of the Generation Y should be allocated a 'Play Budget': 'Money devoted to activities like a group social event, an inclusive (versus exclusive) competition, or even a surprise tray of doughnuts on a Monday morning.' He suggests that you should ask the employees themselves what you think the budget should be spent on - this makes your decisions more effective. The improvement in morale and staff satisfaction, will contribute to productivity - that's a no brainer!

The desire for 'fun at work' is certainly backed up by recent research. In both 2005 and 2006, The N.Z. Best Places to Work Survey, of almost 250 organisations, highlighted fun as a key driver, particularly for those in 'Generation Y. While 'Generation X' and the 'baby-boomers' value fun at work, for these employees gaining a sense of purpose through achievement and belonging at work were perhaps more important. Nevertheless, published findings argue that respondents were adamant that fun at work plays an important role, placing a strong emphasis on celebration.

Conclusion

If we believe the Y Gen commentators, the Y Gen are certainly a new breed, with a new attitude. However, what they want from work is perhaps not new. It does reflect what all employees would probably rather love to have! As Sheehan argues, the difference is that the Y Gen are expecting all the goodies! This is why employers have been struggling to find ways to attract and retain Y Gen staff. However, as they are the staff of the future, doing so must be seen as inevitable. And, maybe we will all be better off as a result!

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"Every institution in the knowledge society has to be globally competitive, even though most organizations will continue to be local in their activities and markets."

- Peter F. Drucker



Clients
should naturally be a major
priority in your day-to-day
schedule.

The way your customers feel towards you is important. The more you show you care about them, the more they'll likely want to continue working with you.

HERE ARE THE TIPS!

- Respond to Clients as Soon as Possible
- Keep Clients Updated
- Go the Extra Mile
- Fix Your Mistakes
- Listen to Your Clients
- Keep Your Promises
- Don't Confuse Clients with Jargon
- Be Patient
- Know Everything You Need to Know
- Put Yourself in Their Shoes



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